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WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Match Ready: Telemundo's New Sports FAST Fits World Cup Strategy

The reason **Telemundo** is launching a FAST channel promising more than 50 hours of new Spanish-language sports content weekly now may seem obvious—we're less than a year away from the biggest sporting event on the planet, the 2026 **FIFA** World Cup, so now is a good time to build momentum for the brand new 24-hour FAST offering **Deportes Ahora**. But Telemundo's expanding ad-supported streaming portfolio is also informed by changes in how its audience consumes video.

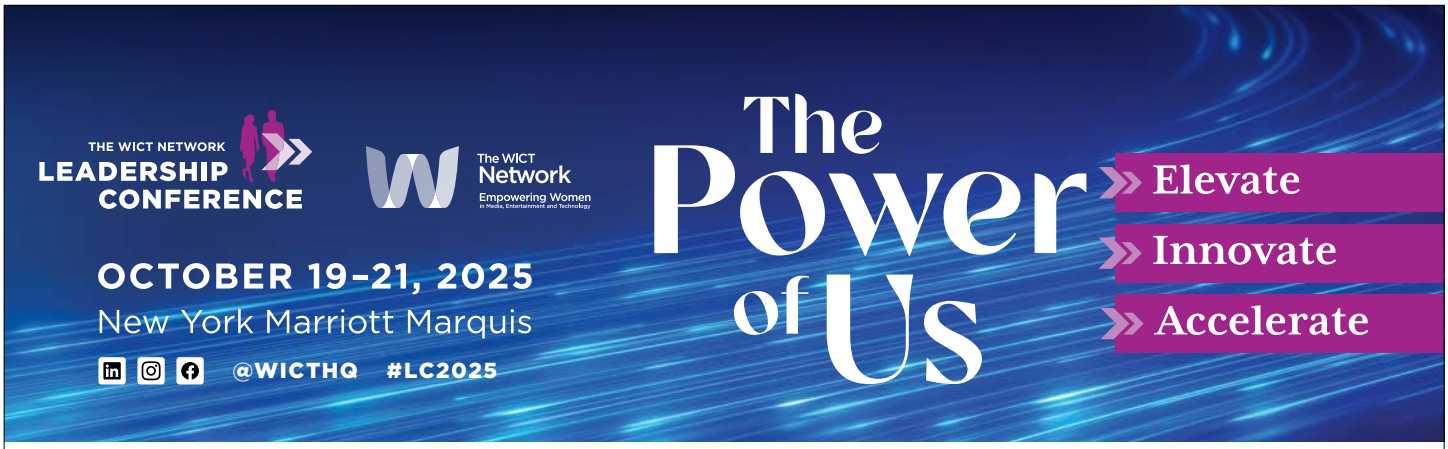
"Two years ago, we did an analysis on a five-year plan, looking at where the revenues were moving. The major growth was coming through AVOD and FAST," said Telemundo EVP of Sports *Joaquin Duro*, adding that reaching more audiences where they're watching content and continuing to diversify its platforms are key to the network's distribution strategy, which, on top of broadcast, also includes traditional Pay TV, **Peacock**, social media and even **WhatsApp** channels.

"We still have great penetration from broadcast, cable and Peacock, but at the same time, there are other platforms," Duro told ***CFX***, noting that cord-cutting is a major reason FAST and free networks are in huge demand, including with younger audiences. Telemundo is even moving some of its women's soccer and FIFA youth tournament coverage to Deportes Ahora vs streaming them on **Facebook** or **YouTube** as they did in the past because "we'll get them exposure there…FAST channels, not only through **Amazon** and **Roku**, but all of the other endpoints, reach audiences that, to be honest, are not in certain places anymore."

Like other programmers playing in multiple sandboxes, Duro stressed Deportes Ahora isn't "cannibalizing" its programming on broadcast, cable and Peacock. "It's complimentary," he said. "What we're doing is every single linear production that we have, we are extending either pre- or post- on FAST…We're not just shifting audiences or revenue from one platform to the other. There are audiences everywhere and our intention is, anybody that lands on any platform, on a WhatsApp channel or on **TikTok**, they'll see Telemundo Deportes, and then they'll navigate to where we're airing the game."

Expectations are high for Deportes Ahora and Duro feels confident about the great sports and shows launching on the channel, which include a daily news show at 1pm, a debate and analysis program at 6pm and a late-night show offering takes on the day's biggest sports moments at 11pm. "Obviously, it takes time to ramp up the distribution, and you have to land on the platforms, and then get discovered. But 2025 looks good and profitable, and 2026 looks great."

There will be plenty for the Telemundo Deportes team to do come 2026. With the World Cup, which kicks off June 11, 2026, being played in the U.S., Mexico and Canada, Duro said the home field advantage means even more pressure to get everything right. Telemundo will turn to its owned and operated local stations to bolster its on-the-ground coverage in the 11 U.S. host cities. The tournament will feature more national teams and matches than any previous edition of the cup, delivering 39 days of live sports events.



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PLATINUM: COMCAST NBCUNIVERSAL
GOLD: Charter COMMUNICATIONS
SILVER: CISCO
BRONZE: WARNER BROS. DISCOVERY
CHAMPION: Microsoft, ONE REPRESENT., The Walt Disney Company

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"We'll have a team already in place there. They know the community, they know the story, they know the fans," Duro said. "That is the advantage we have from other World Cups, but also I would say from other competitors that don't have that presence in the community. Canada, okay, we'll maybe be equal to everyone in Canada. But then when we get to Mexico, we have a huge presence in Mexico. We have an office there, reporters in every city. We have a lot of advantages from production, logistics and storylines."

The World Cup party's already started at Telemundo, which has aired Road to the World Cup programming for months, including live coverage of select **CONCACAF** and **CONMEBOL** qualifier matches, soccer documentaries, special segments on its news programs and more. It will even broadcast the World Cup drawing in December.

Telemundo's World Cup strategy isn't just to tell stories from the pitch but also to "follow soccer fandom, to get closer to the fans" as well as cover the spectacle surrounding the tournament. "Soccer nowadays, it's more than just the sport. It's entertainment, it's music. We will have a bigger presence around the stadium and fan fests."

Deportes Ahora isn't the only big sports announcement concerning Telemundo this week. On Wednesday, **NBCUniversal** parent **Comcast** rolled out a new Xfinity bundle called "World Soccer Ticket," which includes 60 English- and Spanish-language channels as well as Peacock Premium. Duro had nothing to share about how Deportes Ahora ties into that bundle, but said that "everything that we do in Comcast, NBC and Telemundo, all of the teams are in communication and involved." For now, cordless sports fans can access Deportes Ahora on Peacock, Xumo Play, the NBC News FAST hub and Telemundo.com, with some content also streaming on YouTube.

TELEMUNDO'S LIVE SPORTS STRATEGY GOES BEYOND SOCCER

Telemundo's live sports coverage is best known as the go-to Spanish-language purveyor of epic soccer moments, including wall-to-wall coverage of the **FIFA** World Cup, often accompanied by *Andres Cantor*'s famous "Goooooooool!" While the network is certainly proud of its soccer legacy, it's also always looking to expand its horizons to other sports its audience want to watch. That includes Spanish-language coverage of the Olympic Games, the **NFL** and soon the **NBA**, but also more niche sports that cater to specific Hispanic groups. "Obviously, our core is soccer…but at the same time, Hispanic audiences are unique and they're different," *Joaquin Duro*, Telemundo EVP, Sports, told ***CFX***, adding that the network's research points to boxing as "that second sport that Hispanics follow close to the NFL." Duro explained that, while Telemundo is working on adding more boxing content, it's already acquired the broadcast rights to other contact sports, including MMA events, as "Hispanics really over-index on MMA." It's also why the network's newly-launched FAST channel, **Telemundo Deportes Ahora**, will deliver live coverage of bare-knuckle boxing, which Duro describes as a mix between MMA and boxing. Other live sports offerings on the FAST include Basquetbol LATAM and the Pro-Paddle League, a racket sport similar to tennis but on a smaller court with walls. "Argentinians, Mexicans, they really follow paddle," Duro said, noting that there's a huge Argentinian community in the U.S. that the network wants to serve. Paddle may also be of interest to Brazilian and Colombian viewers who tend to regularly tune into tennis. "For us, it's adding other sports so we can serve those audiences, not necessarily just with soccer, and we can diversify…It's just a matter of growing some of the sports." The goal, according to Duro, is to give sports that don't get to cable or broadcast a bit more exposure in order to tap into different audiences.

MONUMENTAL TAKES COMCAST RSN MARCH, YES STILL FEISTY

Monumental Sports Network will move from the cheap seats to the skybox on **Comcast**'s lineup come Sept. 15. As it has done with most other RSNs, Comcast is moving the channel to its Ultimate TV package, which costs $20 more a month than the Popular TV tier that Monumental is currently carried on. **Marquee Sports Network** will be making the same move come Oct. 1, taking the same journey as more than a dozen other RSNs, including **NESN**, **NBC Sports Boston**, **MASN** and **SportsNet Pittsburgh**. One of the few RSNs that has managed to stay on expanded basic (at least for now) is **YES Network**. After a public dispute in March that got the attention of **FCC** Chairman *Brendan Carr*, the two announced an agreement on April 1 for continued distribution, but offered no further details. A recent op/ed in *AM NY* by YES Network Chair and Yankees President *Randy Levine* reminded us that things may not be fully settled. Levine penned the missive in rebuttal to a piece by **NYC Black Chamber of Commerce** President *Tosha Miller*, who claimed that Levine used his relationship with President *Trump* to get the federal government to intervene in a private business dispute. Levine's response accused Miller of a "hit job," suggesting she has a connection with Comcast. YES has maintained that as long as **SNY**, which Comcast is a part owner in, is on expanded basic, then YES should be on that same package. Levine made it clear the fence between the two hasn't been fully mended, writing, "Comcast often uses its corporate muscle to Comcast's advantage against independent programmers. For example, just recently Comcast used its relationships with a major law firm to block YES' ability to retain the law firm even though there was no conflict." With SNY reportedly mulling a potential sale and Comcast continuing its

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RSN march off basic, it's something to keep an eye on. Meanwhile, in Monumental's markets, Comcast will offer Popular TV customers a free preview through Sept. 30 and promos for those who want to continue receiving it starting Oct. 1.

COURT UPHOLDS DATA BREACH RULE

A 2-1 **Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals** panel this week upheld the **FCC**'s data breach reporting rule that was challenged by **NCTA**, **USTelecom**, **CTIA** and others. The new reg, which took effect in March 2024, requires telecom providers to disclose data breaches to customers within 30 days. The industry groups had argued that the rules exceed FCC statutory authority by prescribing data privacy rules for a new class of data—personally identifiable information [PII]. But the court found that based on the statutory text, context and structure in the Communications Act, the agency has the authority to impose reporting requirements in the event of a data breach of customer PII. The decision also rejects the argument that the FCC order violated the Congressional Review Act. Circuit Judge *Richard Allen Griffen* dissented, writing that Congress and the President expressly disapproved a similar rule in 2017, foreclosing this new version under the Congressional Review Act. "The rules, adopting nearly identical regimes for reporting breaches of customer PII, are 'substantially the same.' To hold otherwise is to give administrative agencies an obvious way to circumvent the CRA—just make minor, technical changes to a previously disapproved rule," wrote Griffen.

NEW PARAMOUNT NO SPIN ZONE

New **Paramount** leadership isn't interested in spinning off its cable nets any time soon. That's according to comments made by CEO *David Ellison*, President *Jeff Shell* and Chair of TV Media *George Cheeks* at a presser in L.A. covered by Deadline, Variety and the rest of the Hollywood trades. "Our cable portfolio is a little bit different than some of the other companies that are spinning and doing that stuff," Shell said. "We have less of our economics of the company on cable because they decline so much. But the brands are much more defined." Shell named **BET** as a brand that will be an important part of the company's streaming strategy, adding that "we're thinking about the cable networks not as declining linear assets that we need to spin off or deal with somehow. We're thinking of them as brands that we have to redefine." Cheeks said that the cable group has created many iconic franchises that could be shifted to streaming in the future. **Nickelodeon** and **MTV** were also touted as vital brands that could boost Paramount's streaming ambitions, along with **BET+**, which Ellison suggested could eventually be offered through **Paramount+**. But Shell also stressed that the company has to "balance the economic reality and desire to keep the brands alive until we can reimagine them," adding that they would have to take a "hard look" at MTV and other networks to see "what kinds of content we can support in a linear model, and it's not much. That's not good for the brand long-term; you don't want the brands to die." Shell and Ellison were also candid about upcoming layoffs across the organization as new leadership restructures the business, with Shell stressing that they aim to make all necessary staff cuts in one swoop, as opposed to making quarterly reductions, although he acknowledged it will be painful. Ellison declined to give a timeline on when these cuts will happen.

KAITZ CHANGEMAKERS UNVEILED

The **NCTA** Education Foundation announced the 2025 **ChangeMaker Awards** honorees for the Kaitz Event (a reimagination of the decades-old Kaitz Dinner) that takes place Oct. 22 at the New York Marriott Marquis during the industry's Leadership Development Week. Outgoing **NCTA** CEO *Michael Powell*, fresh off his Founders Circle award in ***Cablefax: The Magazine***, will receive the ChangeMaker Award for Leadership. The night will also give the industry a chance to say their goodbyes to Powell as he heads into retirement. The ChangeMaker Award for Social Impact goes to **FUTURE NOW Media Foundation**, a nonprofit dedicated to mentoring college students and recent grads. NCTA Education Foundation is debuting the Fund the Future Student Scholarship, with *Ashon Calhoun* the first-ever recipient. Calhoun, an Emma Bowen fellow since 2023, balances being a Sergeant in the United States Army National Guard and attending graduate school at Villanova University.

EDITOR'S NOTE

OK, we've heard you. You need more time to finish those **Voices of Impact and Work Culture** entries (previously ***The Diversity List & Work Culture*** magazine). Nominations will stay open until 11:59pm ET on Aug. 17, but this is your final chance to nominate those who build standout cultures. Honorees will be recognized in the October issue of ***Cablefax: The Magazine***.

BASIC CABLE
P2+ PRIME RANKINGS*
(08/04/25-08/10/25)

MON-SUN	MC US AA%	MC US AA (000)
FNC	0.709	2247
ESPN	0.256	813
MSNBC	0.253	801
NFL	0.222	703
HGTV	0.173	548
CNN	0.136	432
USA	0.135	428
TBSC	0.122	387
DISC	0.122	386
HALL	0.118	373
INSP	0.115	363
HIST	0.111	353
TLC	0.102	322
ID	0.101	321
FOOD	0.099	314
HALLMYS	0.096	305
GSN	0.093	293
TVLAND	0.092	292
A&E	0.088	278
LIFE	0.080	255
FX	0.074	236
TNT	0.071	224
ADSM	0.065	206
NAN	0.065	205
BRAVO	0.063	201
NWSMX	0.062	197
WETV	0.062	196
AMC	0.062	195
OXY	0.061	195
REELZ	0.061	193
SYFY	0.059	187
BET	0.057	182
PRMNT	0.057	180
MLB	0.054	172
COM	0.053	168
TENNIS	0.051	161
FRFM	0.045	142
NATGEO	0.045	141
TRAVEL	0.044	141
FETV	0.043	138
APL	0.042	134
IFC TV	0.042	134
ESPN2	0.042	133
HBO	0.041	128
MGNLA	0.040	128
MTV	0.038	120
UP	0.037	116

**P2+ L+SD rankers are based on national Nielsen numbers, not coverage.*